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IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A crate for holding a beverage container having an outer surface with a lower portion and a central label area, the crate comprising:

a unitary bottom panel having an upper surface;

a first pair of opposed side walls and a second pair of opposed side walls attached to the periphery of the bottom panel to form a unitary construction therewith and defining a compartment area therein; and

a divider assembly having a plurality of divider members attached to the upper surface of the bottom panel and extending longitudinally and transversely in the compartment area to define at least one container receiving area for receiving the beverage container therein, the divider assembly including a plurality of low profile standoff portions having a container contact surface spaced from corresponding divider members and generally transverse to the upper surface of the bottom panel, the standoff portions extending inwardly into the at least one container receiving area for engaging the lower portion of the container to provide stability thereto and for maintaining the corresponding beverage container in a spaced relationship from the divider members, wherein the standoff portions are shorter than the divider members and wherein the bottom panel, first and second pairs of opposed side walls and divider assembly are all integrally molded as one piece.

2. (Original) The crate of claim 1, wherein the standoff portions have a height corresponding to the height of the container lower portion.

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3. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 1, wherein the standoff portions have a relatively low profile such that a bottle is contacted below the central label area.

4. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 1, further comprising a lid member pivotably attached to at least one of the first and second pair of opposed side walls, the lid member having a lid inner surface with a lid capture area formed therein corresponding to the at least one container receiving area, the lid capture area sized to receive an upper portion of a respective container for providing alignment to the container.

5. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 1, wherein the bottom panel has a bottom surface with a plurality of projection receiving areas formed therein.

6. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 5, further comprising at least one lid member pivotably attached to at least one of the first and second pair of opposed side walls, the at least one lid member orientable between a closed position and an open position, the lid member having an outer surface with a plurality of projections extending therefrom, wherein when the lid of the crate is in the closed position and a second crate is stacked thereupon, the projections of the lid member are received within a corresponding projection receiving areas of the second crate for providing a more stable stacking configuration.

7. (Original) The crate of claim 1, wherein the plurality of standoff portions have a mating surface for engaging the lower portion of the container.

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8. (Currently Amended) The crate of claim 7, wherein the mating surface of the standoff portions is contoured concavely for engaging the lower portion of the container.

9. (Currently Amended) The crate of claim 7, wherein the standoff portions have a height significantly relatively shorter than the corresponding divider members.

10. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 1, wherein the at least one container receiving area has four standoff portions extending therein for engaging the container.

11. (Original) The crate of claim 1, wherein the standoff portions engage the bottom panel.

12. (Currently Amended) A crate adapted to store therein a container having an outer surface with a central container portion having a label disposed thereon and a lower portion disposed below the label, the crate comprising:

a floor member having an upper surface with a plurality of container support portions disposed thereon;

a first pair of opposed upstanding side walls and a second pair of opposed upstanding side walls attached to a periphery of the floor member and defining a compartment area with the floor member;

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a plurality of vertically disposed divider members extending within the compartment area defining with the container support portions a plurality of container receiving areas, the divider members having a lower portion adjacent the floor member; and

at least one standoff member disposed proximate the floor member and offset inwardly from the lower portion of the divider members for extending into a respective one of the plurality of container receiving areas, wherein the at least one standoff member protrudes upwardly from the upper surface of the floor member and protrudes inwardly toward the container ~~portion~~ from the divider members, the at least one standoff member having a height relatively shorter than the divider members such that it is adapted to engage the lower portion of the container and oriented such that it does not contact the label of the container.

13. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 12, wherein the plurality of divider members extend longitudinally and transversely in the compartment area.

14. (Original) The crate of claim 12, further comprising a lid member pivotably attached to at least one of the first and second pair of opposed upstanding side walls, the lid member having a lid inner surface with a lid capture area formed therein corresponding to each container retention area, the lid capture area sized to receive an upper portion of a respective container for providing alignment to the container.

15. (Original) The crate of claim 12, wherein the floor member has a bottom surface with a plurality of projection receiving areas formed therein.

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16. (Original) The crate of claim 15, further comprising at least one lid member pivotably attached to at least one of the first and second pair of opposed side walls, the at least one lid member orientable between a closed position and an open position, the lid member having an outer surface with a plurality of projections extending therefrom, wherein when the lid of the crate is in the closed position and a second crate is stacked thereupon, at least some of the plurality of projections on the lid member are received within corresponding projection receiving areas of the second crate for providing a more stable stacking configuration.

17. (Previously Presented). The crate of claim 12, wherein said at least one standoff member has a mating surface for engaging the container.

18. (cancelled)

19. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 12, wherein the divider members have a height relatively shorter than the first and second pairs of opposed upstanding side walls.

20. (Currently Amended) A crate for retaining containers having an outer surface with an upper container portion and a lower container portion, the crate comprising:

a unitary floor having a periphery and an upper surface with a plurality of container support areas;

a first and second pair of opposed sidewalls extending upwardly from the floor periphery forming a unitary construction therewith and defining a compartment area;

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a lid member having a first hinge portion pivotably attached to a second hinge portion of at least one of the first and second pair of opposed side walls and movable between an open and closed position, the lid member having a lid inner surface having a lid capture area formed therein corresponding to a respective one of the container support areas, the lid capture area sized to receive therein the upper container portion of a respective one of the containers for providing alignment to the container;

a plurality of divider members extending within the compartment and projecting upwardly from the floor to define container receiving areas, wherein the floor, first and second pairs of opposed side walls and divider members are all integrally molded as one piece; and

a plurality of low profile spacer members disposed proximate the floor and spaced inwardly from the divider members into corresponding container receiving areas such that the container support areas and spacer members define pockets for receiving the lower container portion, the spacer members contacting the containers and spacing the containers from the divider members and the sidewalls.

21. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 20, wherein at least one of the sidewalls has a lock receiver formed therein, and the lid member has at least one locking member attached thereto, such that when the lid member is in the closed position, the locking member is received within the lock receiver for securing the lid member thereto.

22. (cancelled)

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23. (Original) The crate of claim 20, wherein the floor has a bottom surface with a plurality of receiving areas formed therein.

24. (Original) The crate of claim 20, wherein the lid member has an outer surface with a projection member extending therefrom corresponding to each lid capture area, wherein when the lid member is in the closed position and a second crate is stacked thereupon, at least some of the projections on the outer surface of the lid member is received within a corresponding projection receiving area of the second crate for providing a more stable stacking configuration.

25. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 12, wherein the divider members extend above the central container portion of the container.

26. (Currently Amended) The crate of claim 12, further comprising at least one other standoff member disposed in the corner of the crate container proximate the floor member for spacing the container from adjacent sidewalls.

27. (Cancel)

28. (Cancel)

29. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 1 wherein the divider members are generally planar and wherein intersections of the divider members form corners in the container

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receiving areas, the plurality of standoff portions each extending from a longitudinally-extending one of the divider members to a transversely-extending one of the divider members in the corners.

30. (Previously Presented) A crate for holding a beverage container having a lower portion and a central label area, the crate comprising:

a unitary bottom panel having an upper surface;

a first pair of opposed side walls and a second pair of opposed side walls attached to the periphery of the bottom panel to form a unitary construction therewith and defining a compartment area therein; and

a divider assembly having a plurality of generally planar divider members attached to the upper surface of the bottom panel and extending longitudinally and transversely in the compartment area to define at least one container receiving area for receiving the beverage container therein, wherein intersections of the divider members form corners in the container receiving areas, the divider assembly including a plurality of low profile standoff portions each having a container contact surface spaced from corresponding divider members and generally transverse to the upper surface of the bottom panel, the standoff portions extending inwardly into the at least one container receiving area for engaging the lower portion of the container to provide stability thereto and for maintaining the corresponding beverage container in a spaced relationship from the divider members, the plurality of standoff portions each extending from a longitudinally-extending one of the divider members to a transversely-extending one of the divider members in the corners, wherein the plurality of standoff portions are contoured for

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engaging the lower portion of the container and wherein the standoff portions are substantially shorter than the divider members.

31. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 30 further including at least one of the plurality of standoff portions in each of four corners of each container area.

32. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 29 wherein the plurality of standoff portions protrude upwardly from the upper surface of the bottom panel and protrude inwardly toward the container from the divider members.

33. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 32 wherein the bottom panel, first and second pairs of opposed side walls and divider assembly are all a single integrally-molded plastic piece.

34. (Currently Amended) A crate for holding a beverage container having a lower portion and a central label area, the crate comprising:

a bottom panel having an upper surface;

a first pair of opposed side walls and a second pair of opposed side walls attached to the periphery of the bottom panel to form a unitary construction therewith and defining a compartment area therein; and

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a divider assembly having a plurality of divider members attached to the upper surface of the bottom panel and extending longitudinally and transversely in the compartment area to define at least one container receiving area for receiving the beverage container therein, the divider assembly including a plurality of standoff portions shorter than the divider members, each standoff portion having a container contact surface spaced from corresponding divider members and generally transverse to the upper surface of the bottom panel, the standoff portions protruding inwardly toward the container from the divider members for engaging the lower portion of the container without contacting the central label area to provide stability ~~thereto~~ to the container and for maintaining the corresponding beverage container in a spaced relationship from the divider members.

35. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 34 wherein the bottom panel, first and second pairs of opposed side walls and divider assembly are all a single integrally-molded plastic piece.

36. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 34 wherein the standoff portions are substantially shorter than the divider members.

37. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 34 wherein the standoff portions protrude upwardly from the upper surface of the bottom panel.

38. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 1 wherein the standoff portions are substantially shorter than the divider members.

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39. (New) The crate of claim 1 further including the beverage container having the lower portion and the central label area, the beverage container in the at least one container receiving area, and wherein the standoff portions each have a height less than a height of the lower portion of the container below the central label area such that the standoff portions contact the lower portion of the beverage container without contacting the central label area.

40. (New) The crate of claim 1 wherein the container contact surface of each standoff portion is concave.

41. (New) The crate of claim 40 wherein the container contact surface of each standoff portion is concave when not in contact with the beverage container.

42. (New) The crate of claim 41 wherein the standoff portions each have a height less than 1 1/8 inches.

42. (New) The crate of claim 42 wherein the standoff portions each have a height less than 7/8 inch.

43. (New) The crate of claim 1 wherein the divider members are at least several times taller than the standoff portions.

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44. (New) The crate of claim 30 wherein the plurality of standoff portions each have a height such that each standoff portion would contact the lower portion of the container without contacting the central label area of the container.

45. (New) The crate of claim 30 wherein the plurality of standoff portions each have a height less than a height of the lower portion of the container below the central label area.

46. (New) The crate of claim 30 further including the beverage container having an outer surface including the lower portion and the central label area, the beverage container in the at least one container receiving area, and wherein the standoff portions each have a height less than a height of the lower portion of the container below the central label area such that the standoff portions contact the lower portion of the beverage container without contacting the central label area.